| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information ResponseOur reference: FOI 25-2513Responded to: 15 September 2025 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

1. **Number of victims of human trafficking identified in Scotland in 2024 and up to date in 2025, divided by local authority. Can you add the most common form of exploitation by local authority and overall, in Scotland.**

In response to your request above, the number of human trafficking victims identified by Police Scotland and submitted to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) are:

* 2024 – 340 victims
* 2025 – 276 victims (year to date)

The details of these referrals are not recorded by Local Authority and as such, the information sought is not held by Police Scotland and section 17 of the Act therefore applies.

To be of assistance we can instead provide a breakdown of referrals by Police Scotland’s 13 territorial Divisions - these figures are provided in the tables below.

**Total number of Human Trafficking victims referred to NRM in 2024 - by Division and Most common form of exploitation**

| **Division** | **No. of victims**  | **Most common form of exploitation** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| A – North East | 33 | Forced Criminality  |
| C – Forth Valley | 14 | Forced Criminality  |
| D – Tayside | 9 | Forced Criminality  |
| E – Edinburgh | 46 | Forced Criminality  |
| G – Greater Glasgow | 95 | Forced Criminality  |
| J – The Lothians & Scottish Borders | 25 | Forced Criminality  |
| K – Renfrewshire & Inverclyde | 23 | Forced Criminality  |
| L – Argyll & West Dunbartonshire | 13 | Labour Exploitation |
| N – Highlands & Islands | 6 | Forced Criminality  |
| P – Fife | 6 | Forced Criminality  |
| Q - Lanarkshire | 32 | Forced Criminality  |
| U – Ayrshire | 34 | Forced Criminality  |
| V – Dumfries & Galloway | 4 | Forced Criminality  |

Overall most common form of exploitation: Forced Criminality

**Total number of Human Trafficking victims referred to NRM in 2025 (YTD) - by Division and Most common form of exploitation**

| **Division** | **No. of victims**  | **Most common form of exploitation** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| A – North East | 13 | Forced Criminality |
| C – Forth Valley | 6 | Forced Criminality |
| D – Tayside | 16 | Forced Criminality |
| E – Edinburgh | 39 | Forced Criminality |
| G – Greater Glasgow | 105 | Forced Criminality |
| J – The Lothians & Scottish Borders | 14 | Forced Criminality |
| K – Renfrewshire & Inverclyde | 11 | Forced Criminality |
| L – Argyll & West Dunbartonshire | 11 | Forced Criminality |
| N – Highlands & Islands | 9 | Forced Criminality |
| P – Fife | 8 | Forced Criminality |
| Q - Lanarkshire | 24 | Forced Criminality |
| U – Ayrshire | 19 | Forced Criminality |
| V – Dumfries & Galloway | 1 | Forced Criminality |

Overall most common form of exploitation: Forced Criminality

1. **Number of people arrested in relation to human trafficking offences in Scotland in 2024 and up to date in 2025, divided by local authority.**

The Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 removed the separate concepts of arrest and detention and replaced them with a power of arrest without warrant - where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting a person has committed, or is committing, an offence.

When a person is arrested, a statement of arrest should be read over as soon as reasonably practicable, and details recorded in the arresting officer’s notebook.

A person is ‘Not Officially Accused’ (a suspect) when arrested and not cautioned and charged. They are ‘Officially Accused’ once arrested and cautioned and charged.

If conveyed to a police station, the arrested person will have their details recorded in our National Custody System.

There are situations however whereby a person must be released from police custody prior to their arrival at a police station - effectively they are ‘de-arrested’ - where the reasonable grounds for suspicion no longer exist. In those circumstances, the details of an arrested person are not held electronically.

As a result, we are unfortunately unable to collate comprehensive arrest data, as case by case assessment of all officer notebooks would be required - in addition to the partial arrest data held in the National Custody System.

Unfortunately, I estimate that it would cost well in excess of the current FOI cost threshold of £600 to process your request and I am therefore refusing to provide the information sought in terms of section 12(1) - Excessive Cost of Compliance.

For the reasons outlined above, Police Scotland do not collate data on arrests.

Instead, data is compiled and published based on recorded and detected crimes - [Crime data - Police Scotland](https://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/how-we-do-it/crime-data/).

Detected crimes are those where an accused has been identified and there exists a sufficiency of evidence under Scots Law to justify consideration of criminal proceedings.

1. **For the number of victims and arrests in the Highlands during this time period, can you break these down by location?**

I can confirm the breakdown of the 15 Human Trafficking victims referred above in N Division as follows:

South Highland - 1

North Highland - 1

Western Isles - 1

Inverness – 11

G Division (was not actually N Division) - 1

If you require any further assistance, please contact us quoting the reference above.

You can request a review of this response within the next 40 working days by email or by letter (Information Management - FOI, Police Scotland, Clyde Gateway, 2 French Street, Dalmarnock, G40 4EH). Requests must include the reason for your dissatisfaction.

If you remain dissatisfied following our review response, you can appeal to the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner (OSIC) within 6 months - [online](https://www.foi.scot/appeal), by email or by letter (OSIC, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, KY16 9DS).

Following an OSIC appeal, you can appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law only.

This response will be added to our [Disclosure Log](http://www.scotland.police.uk/access-to-information/freedom-of-information/disclosure-log) in seven days' time.

Every effort has been taken to ensure our response is as accessible as possible.
If you require this response to be provided in an alternative format, please let us know.